

## How brands influence our thinking

### 1. Read the quote, explain what you think it means and say to what extent you agree with it.

*“Branding is what people say about you when you’re not in the room.”*  
 – Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon

### 2. Discuss the questions.

- What brand first comes to your mind when you think of the items below?
  - a soda
  - a laptop
  - a gaming console
  - sportswear
  - a cup of coffee
  - sunglasses
- Have you chosen the same brand as your classmates? If so, discuss why that might be.
- Are you a loyal customer of any particular brand? If so, say why.

### 3. You are going to watch a video in which experts talk about branding. Read the quote from the video and choose one option below. Then, watch the first part of the [video](https://youtu.be/4eIDBV4Mpek) [https://youtu.be/4eIDBV4Mpek] (to 02:26) and check your answer.

Acetaminophen, also known as paracetamol, is an analgesic drug widely used to treat minor aches and pains, such as headaches, and also to reduce fever.

*“Coke is just soda, Tylenol just acetaminophen, and Levi’s are just jeans. Yet consumers go out of their way to select these specific brands over others.”*

Consumers choose certain brands over others because...

- A. our brains are influenced by persuasive advertising, leading to irrational spending choices.
- B. they want to define who they are and connect with others in a certain way. [01:24]
- C. they value expensive products more than cheap ones.
- D. they identify with the brands their family has traditionally chosen.

### 4. Watch the rest of the [video](#) (from 02:26) and take notes on the following topics.

Possible answers:

- A. The experiment on Apple users and Galaxy users The experimenters observed the brain activity of iPhone and Samsung Galaxy users while they were exposed to news about each brand. While Apple users showed strong emotional connection, Samsung users didn’t. However, they did show a

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positive reaction if the Apple headline was negative, which seems to suggest Samsung users choose Samsung, not out of love for the brand, but because they hate Apple. [02:57]

B. Making informed consumer choices In order to make better choices, as consumers we need to become aware of the strong influence brands have on our decisions, pause for a moment and reflect about our motivations to buy a certain product. [04:19]

C. What brands are compared to and why Brands are compared to institutions like the church or to communities which traditionally provided humans with the support system they need. Nowadays, this role is being fulfilled by brands which influence how we see ourselves and how others perceive us. [04:55]

### 5. Discuss the following statements and ideas and say to what extent you agree with them.

T Depending on the number of students in the class, you can assign a different point to each student or group of students.

- We relate to brands in the same way we relate to people.
- Without being fully aware of it, we choose brands to express our personalities, values or lifestyle through them.
- Brands can fulfil the need for connection and belonging just like communities and institutions used to.
- I am aware that I automatically lean towards certain brands when making a purchase.
- As consumers, we don't really understand the brand-building strategies that underlie our perceptions of brands.

### 6. Match the sentence beginnings (A–H) and endings (1–8) to complete each of the brand-building strategies.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| A. Foster loyalty by delivering... 3              | 1. ... a compelling story that shares values the targeted audience cares deeply about.          |
| B. Weave a genuine narrative by telling... 1      | 2. ... deep connections with customers through experiences that resonate on an emotional level. |
| C. Forge strong emotional bonds by nurturing... 2 | 3. ... consistent quality and encouraging support from customers.                               |
| D. Strengthen relatability by showing... 7        | 4. ... to positive change in the world.   |
| E. Align with social values by contributing... 4  | 5. ... a segment of the market with their needs and preferences.                                |
| F. Serve a niche by targeting... 5                | 6. ... consistent and meeting expectations.   |
| G. Leverage market buzzwords by using... 8        |   |
| H. Ensure reliability by being... 6               |   |

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7. ... how products have positively impacted the life of real customers.
8. ... trendy terms that generate interest and increase brand visibility.
7. Read the statements in ex. 6 again and say which three strategies contribute most to a brand's success. Give examples by considering popular brands.
8. You are going to read a text about a rising phenomenon among consumers, often referred to as the alone-together paradox. Say what you think this paradox might be. Then, read the text to check your ideas.

Brand-businesses are facing a growing trend where customers seek to minimize interpersonal interactions, particularly in service-related settings – a phenomenon known as the Hermit Consumer. However, despite this desire for disconnection, the human need for connection remains strong. If brands want to win customer **loyalty**, they must understand this alone-together paradox. The challenge lies in actively **forging** a connection with consumers while respecting their new desires. The fast-food sector has managed to meet this preference by targeting the drive-thru **niche**. While consumers may prefer the solitude of their car, they still need to belong, but this “belonging” is done differently as customers seek to validate and share experiences of their drive-thru visits on social media.

Along with the drive-thru, kiosks at fast food restaurants also **align** with the desires of the hermit consumer, allowing them to place an order on the screen, without the need to talk to anyone. By **leveraging** technology, kiosks and drive-thrus have successfully managed to satisfy the dual need for disconnection and digital recognition.

Source: [Branding Strategy Insider](#)



9. Read the text again and complete the gaps with the correct form of five of the words in the boxes.

align

forge

leverage

loyalty

narrative

niche

relatability

weave

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10. Complete the statements with your own ideas. Share them with a partner and see if they agree.

- The Hermit Consumer phenomenon can also be seen...
- When making a purchase, I feel anxious or pressured if...
- Another way brands have adapted to changing consumer preferences to enhance customer loyalty is...
- Between maximizing convenience or forging strong emotional bonds among customers, I'd rather brands...
- When it comes to reliability, from my experience as a consumer, I'd say leveraging technology...

**T** This worksheet includes an additional task that you can use as homework or revision. It's only available in the teacher's version of the worksheet. The task with the answer key is below, while the students' version is on the last page. Print it and hand it out to your students.

Read the definition of brand archetypes and the statements about how popular brands adopt them. Replace the words in bold with the correct form of one of the words in the boxes. Then, finish the sentences with your own ideas.

align

forge

leverage

loyalty

niche

relatability

reliability

weave

- A. The Sage Archetype inspires others through their innovative ideas. Apple's tagline "Think different" **complies** with this archetype by... **aligns**
- B. Nike, consistent with the courageous Hero Archetype, shows real athletes overcoming obstacles, managing to create a sense of **closeness** which might inspire individuals to... **relatability**
- C. Airbnb's marketing campaign emphasizes themes of discovery, community and cultural immersion, as the Explorer Archetype does, empowering travellers to **build** meaningful bonds with hosts and other travellers and to... **forge**
- D. Consistent with the Caregiver Archetype, Starbucks has intricately **created** a brand narrative that emphasizes its commitment to fostering inclusivity and making a positive impact on society. As a consequence, the brand probably... **woven**
- E. Coca-Cola's tagline "Taste the Feeling" embodies the Lover Archetype, which represents passion, pleasure and emotional connection. By **taking advantage of** the buzzword "feeling", this brand drives consumers to... **leveraging**

### **brand archetypes:**

symbolic characters with a certain personality that brands adopt to create meaningful connections with consumers

Source: [The Brand Leader](#)

# ESL Brains

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